

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and the prior art rejections based on Pouponnot and Janknecht.

Claims 7 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being allegedly anticipated by Liu *et al.* In addition, claims 7, 14, 15 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being allegedly anticipated by Nakao *et al.* At the outset, it appears that the rejection based on Nakao *et al.* was intended to be a rejection under §102(b), since the publication date of Nakao *et al.* is over a year prior to the domestic priority date of the invention. In any case, without necessarily agreeing with the rejections, Applicants respectfully note that claims 7 and 15 have been canceled by way of amendment above, and claims 14 and 17 have been amended to depend on claims 8 and 16. In addition, claims 8 and 16 have been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 7 and 15, respectfully. The Office Action indicates that claims 8 and 16 would be allowable if rewritten to incorporate the limitations of the base claim.

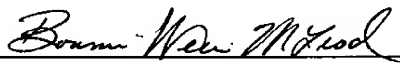
In view of the amendments and remarks above, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under §35 U.S.C. 102 are respectfully requested.

This reply is fully responsive to the Office Action dated June 3, 2003. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is next in order and is respectfully requested.

Except for issue fees payable under 37 CFR §1.18, the commissioner is hereby authorized by this paper to charge any additional fees during the pendency of this application including fees due under 37 CFR §1.16 and 1.17 which may be required, including any required extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 50-0310. This paragraph is intended to be a **CONSTRUCTIVE PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME** in accordance with 37 CFR §1.136(a)(3).

If the Examiner has any further questions relating to this Reply or to the application in general, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone so that allowance of the present application may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted
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